

## ABSTRACT

The School District of Osceola County (SDOC), Florida is a Local Education Agency situated in a diverse area of Central Florida. Of 63,000 students, 27.5% are English Language Learners, 14% receive exceptional student education, and 81% qualify for free/reduced lunch. The U.S. Census Bureau's Small Area Income and Poverty Estimate (SAIPE) shows 26.7% of Osceola County children (5-17) are living in poverty. Recent data demonstrates widening gaps in access to effective educators and student achievement between high-need and less-challenging schools. The project targets 23 schools (only one of which has a free/reduced lunch rate below 50%). Targeted sites reported an average free/reduced lunch rate of 93% and earned a school grade of C. They fell below 60% proficiency in English Language Arts and Math on the 2016 Florida Standards Assessment.

As a single eligible applicant, the SDOC seeks grant funding for *Project PROPEL (Producing Results through Osceola's Professional Educator Ladder)*. Activities will combine research-based methods to meet local needs, address Absolute Priority 1 (Human Capital Management System - HCMS) and 2 (Evaluation and Support Systems for Teachers), and incorporate Competitive Preference Priorities 1 (Equitable Access to Effective Educators) and 2 (Diverse and Effective Workforce). To serve high-need schools, the goals are to enhance use of the HCMS and performance-based compensation, improve the teacher evaluation and support system, increase the instructional quality and effectiveness, establish a two-step teacher career ladder, and increase the student achievement. Examples of activities are instituting a new teacher induction system through development of instructional mentors for beginning teachers and delivery of targeted professional learning, facilitating advancement opportunities like National Board Certification via supplements, refining recruitment/retention efforts, and creating model classrooms.